

Hair Loss - From Severe Stress

Definition

- Major thinning of the hair starting 3 months after a stressful event
- The medical name for this type of hair loss is telogen effluvium.

Health Information

Symptoms

- Lots of hair is noticed in a comb or brush.
- The hair falls out from all parts of the scalp.
- This leads to major thinning of the hair, but no bald spots.

Cause

- A severe stressful event
- Reason: Hair follicles are very sensitive to physical or emotional stress.
- Examples are a high fever, severe illness or surgery. Also, a psychological crisis or a crash diet can be triggers.
- In pregnant teens, the stress can be childbirth.
- Hair loss is not caused by shampoos.

Time Frame for Hair Loss and Return

- The hair begins to fall out about 3 months (100 days) after a severe stress. (Range: 2 to 4 months).
- It will keep falling out in large amounts over the next 3 or 4 months.
- After hair stops shedding, the hair will slowly grow back. This can take 6 to 8 months for all the hair to grow back.
- The whole cycle takes about 12 months.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Thinning of the hair after a major stress can happen to anyone.
- If your child is healthy, all the hair will return.
- But there's no way to hurry the process.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Hair Care:

- Treat the hair gently.
- Wash the hair no more than once per day. Always use a hair conditioner.
- Comb the hair rather than brushing it.
- Be careful at combing out any tangled hair.
- Avoid any tight hair styles such as braids or a pony tail.
- Don't put tension on the hair.

3. Special Creams or Shampoos:

- No special treatment is helpful.
- The hair growth cycle needs to run its course.

4. **What to Expect:**

- No more than 50% of the hair will be lost.
- Once it starts to regrow, all the hair will grow back in 6 months.
- The new hair will look normal.

Call Your Doctor If

- Hair does not grow back by 12 months
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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